



City of Ridgecrest **Police Department**

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-- PRESS RELEASE --

Drunk Driving Ruins the Holidays

Police Aim to Save Lives With ‘Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over’ Crackdown

If you're enjoying the holidays with a drink, The Ridgecrest Police Department has a message for you: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*. Due to the increase in drunk-driving-related fatalities around the holidays each year, law enforcement agencies across America will be actively searching for and arresting drunk drivers from December 18th 2015 to January 3, 2016

As part of the national *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over* enforcement campaign period; police, sheriff and the CHP will be deploying DUI Checkpoints and DUI Saturation Patrols during the upcoming 17 day DUI Enforcement Campaign throughout the region. Ridgecrest PD will be conducting a DUI Checkpoint and a Saturation Patrol on December 18, 2015.

There are 10,000 reasons to crackdown: in 2013, 10,076 people were killed in crashes involving a drunk driver. In December 2013 alone there were 733 people killed in crashes involving at least one driver or motorcycle operator with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .08 or higher. Twenty-three of those deaths occurred on Christmas Day. California was witness to 98 deaths and another 1,852 injured in alcohol involved collisions in December 2013.

"It's time for all drivers to get the message," said Chief Ron Strand. "Drunk driving is a choice you make, and when you make that choice, people get hurt or die. That's why we're joining with law enforcement nationwide to share the message: *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over*." "The safest way to get home," Chief Strand said, "is to drive sober or catch a ride with a sober designated driver."

Recent statistics reveal that 30 percent of drivers in fatal crashes had one or more drugs in their systems. A study of active drivers showed more tested positive for drugs that may impair driving (14 percent) than did for alcohol (7.3 percent). Of the drugs, marijuana was most prevalent, at 7.4 percent, slightly more than alcohol. Everyone should be mindful that if you're taking medication – whether prescription or over-the-counter – drinking even small amounts of alcohol can greatly intensify the impairment affects.

Law Enforcement emphasizes the preventable nature of drunk driving reminding everyone that all it takes is a little planning ahead. Designate a sober driver or call a cab. But whatever you do, don't drink and drive.

Ridgecrest PD reminds everyone to follow these simple tips to stay safe:

- Plan a safe way to get home ***before*** you attend the party. Alcohol impairs judgment, as well as reaction time. If you're impaired you're more likely to choose to drive drunk.
- Designate a sober driver; take public transportation, a car service, or call a sober friend or family member to get home.
- Walking while impaired can be just as dangerous as drunk driving. Designate a sober friend to walk you home.
- Use your community's sober ride program.
- If you see someone you think is about to drive while impaired, take their keys and help them get home safely.

If you're caught drinking and driving you could face jail time, fines, loss of driver's license, towing fees, and other DUI expenses, totaling \$10,000 on average. That's not a small price, and that doesn't even count the heftier price you could pay: the price of your life or someone else's.

In addition to reminding all drivers to drive sober, Chief Strand is calling on everyone to be alert and 'Report Drunk Drivers – Call 911! If you see a dangerous driver call immediately! If someone you know is about to drive after drinking, take their keys and help them get home safely. "We've got to work together to make our roads safer this December and year-round," he said.

Remember, driving after drinking should never be an option. *Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over.*

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